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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Siam - French Indo China

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DATE: 25X1X6

SUBJECT Reactions to Return of Provinces

INFO.

DIST. 13 November 1946

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ORIGIN
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This document is hereby regarded to
CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the
letter of 18 October 1978 from the
Director of Central Intelligence to the

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SUPPLEMENT

A. Free Cambodians

1. Phra Phiset Phanit, leader of Free Cambodians in Siam, is bitterly disappointed over the outcome of the Franco-Siamese negotiations which resulted in a Siamese decision to return the disputed provinces to French Indo China.
2. Phra Phiset stated he remained away from the Parliamentary debates leading up to this decision because had he attended he would have counselled the Siamese to fight for the retention of the provinces, even though he knew it would be a lost cause. He spent some time in Cambodia just prior to the Siamese action, and advised the Cambodians not to stage a mass evacuation, but to remain in their homes and show the French "they could take it". He hopes this course will aid the Cambodians in their relations with the French. However, he believes the Cambodians are greatly disturbed and may stage an uprising when the French return. If they do this, Phra Phiset believes the situation would become hopeless as they would fight against vastly superior forces so far as strength and equipment are concerned. It was his opinion that with the return of Cambodia to French Indo China the one gateway to a free Cambodia was closed.
3. He states the Cambodians have absorbed more Siamese culture in the six years of Siamese administration than they absorbed French culture in thirty years. He feels the French action of returning the provinces to the native governments is a bid to build up French prestige with the Lao and Cambodian people.
4. The rice crop in Battambang province is a complete loss because of two floods in the current growing season. The price of rice in Battambang, normally a surplus area, is as high as that in Bangkok. (comment: The loss of the rice producing provinces will mitigate in Siam's favor insofar as her international commitments for rice are concerned. A considerable part of the commitment was based on estimated crop yields from these areas which, now no longer under Siamese jurisdiction, will be deducted proportionately from her commitments. However, had Siam retained the provinces she probably would have been obliged to ship rice to

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Battambang because of the flood damage.)

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[REDACTED]B. Free Laos

5. Friction appears to be developing between at least two of the Free Lao cabinet members. [REDACTED] stated Prince Souphanavong, commander of the southern Free Lao forces, wants to continue needling the French and was probably responsible for an attack on the French at Pakse in early October by Free Cambodians and Free Annamites. In this attack approximately fifty French were killed; five trucks and five bridges and a quantity of armaments were destroyed. According to [REDACTED] Prince Souphanavong is not a very able soldier; he does not understand the tactics of guerrilla warfare. For example, in the Savannakhet campaign he advocated massing all Free Lao troops, whereas [REDACTED] eventually prevailed and deployed the troops in small groups. Prince Souphanavong's idea of fighting the French is not to defeat them, which he knows is impossible, but to demonstrate resistance and dissatisfaction.

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6. [REDACTED]

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C. Future Alignments

7. [REDACTED] contacted a number of Siamese and has formulated the opinion the Siamese will not cooperate with the Annamites in the future and are not likely to cooperate with the Burmese. The most logical grouping will be Laos, Cambodians and Siamese. Phra Phiset has expressed the opinion that the Annamites in Cambodia will probably leave with the return of the French.

D. Annamites in Siam

8. An Annamite residing in Bangkok is exploring the possibilities of publishing an Annamite newspaper in English in Bangkok. There is a large Annamite population now in Siam but few of them speak English, so it appears likely this paper would be a propaganda organ aimed at the European population.

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